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## BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTICES

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*Social Process.* By CHARLES HORTON COOLEY. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1918. Pp. vi+430. \$2.00.

To one not familiar with Professor Cooley's writings it might come with a shock of surprise to find a book with such a title, by a recognized sociologist, that seems to be written for folks to read rather than for the initiated to decipher. One wonders if Professor Cooley's reputation for profundity ever suffers because one always knows what he is talking about, and it always means something that has to do definitely with the affairs and interests of real people. Professor Cooley believes that a sociologist "needs the fullest sympathy and participation in the currents of life. He can no more stand aloof than can the novelist or the poet. . . . To attempt to build up sociology as a technical tradition remote from the great currents of literature and philosophy would, in my opinion, be a fatal error. It cannot avoid being difficult, but it should be as little abstruse as possible. If it is not human it is nothing." Need one add that he has earned the right to advocate this standard?

Yet he is not afraid of abstractions. At the start he introduces his reader to the idea that such things as languages, myths, and styles of architecture are impersonal forms of life, having tendencies, waging conflicts, growing and decaying without the conscious connivance or recognition of the particular persons through whom their life-processes are carried on.

It is obviously impossible to summarize a book which covers the whole range of current life and presents the ripe judgments of a mind of unusual scope, penetration, and flexibility. He finds that society is not merely an organism but many organisms. He prefers to call them organisms rather than organizations, because organization suggests a tool fashioned to a conscious purpose, whereas these forms of social life grow by the tentative process of trial and selection. In this process the designed policies of men are but experiments. If they work, they grow and change in growing; if they do not work, they are discarded. These phases of life are endlessly interrelated, baffling any attempt to study the world in compartments and causing every special study to ramify until it embraces the whole universe. This creates an illusion like the illusion

of the rows of trees in an orchard, which obligingly choose whatever point the observer is standing as the point from which to radiate. They do truly radiate from that point—also from every other. The economic interpretation of history and other forms of particularism—dare one suggest also the central place of the theory of value and distribution in economic thought?—are examples of this combination of truth and error. Social change, being a tentative, organic growth, cannot be predicted in mechanical fashion, but it may to some slight extent be foreseen through an effort of creative imagination by a mind which has entered into the spirit of the life with which it deals.

More concretely, the book deals with personal aspects of social process, such as culture, opportunity and class, success, the competitive spirit, the higher emulation, and discipline; with degeneration, social factors in biological survival, group conflict, valuation, and such phases of intelligent process as public opinion, rational control through standards, social science, art, and social idealism.

For the economist, aside from the fact that it is good for him to see the world as a whole, the book contains much of an economic character, and it is equally good to see what economic facts and ideas look like to one who has formed the habit of viewing the world as a whole. Professor Cooley is closer to the economist than most of his fellow-sociologists, and his reactions on economic matters are entitled to corresponding weight. He finds that the Industrial Revolution, like any great and sudden unforeseen change, produced a demoralization in the social mind from which we have only partly emerged. He finds that economic opportunity must be made a social science, since it "calls for a knowledge and preparation far beyond what can be expected of unaided intelligence." He condemns the economics that overemphasizes the self-seeking motives, and holds that it requires no unusual virtue to practice emulation in service; granted a group spirit and organization of which such emulation is a part, it needs only the ordinary traits of loyalty and suggestibility. He emphasizes the need of reasonable security for a healthy morale.

The chief interest of the economist, however, will center in the chapters on valuation. Here the author displays a penetrating insight into big truths and a constructive analysis of them which rises superior to possible minor loosenesses of formulation and makes these chapters a valuable contribution to the subject, and one which every graduate student in economics should know, and every undergraduate should get the gist of, in some form or other. Price is an estimate of economic worth made by society. But since society is not one but many

organisms, price is the resultant of many estimates of worth by different individuals and classes, formed under the influence of class prestige, tradition, fashion, and other forms of social and economic suggestion, expressed through legal and social institutions which determine the extent to which an estimate of worth is translated into an effective demand, and weighted according to the purchasing power which the various groups can command—itsself a product of social, legal, and economic institutions and of the whole process of production, valuation, and exchange that has gone before. The effect of this view is to dethrone price as an ultimate measure of worth and an ultimate guide of economic efforts, while increasing one's respect for it as an expression of the many sides and many forces of a growing and developing social life.

The chapters carry one into the ever-misty question of the difference between economic values, aesthetic values, moral values, etc. This question will remain misty as long as there are some who think that standards of right and beauty are absolute and eternal, and others who think that beauty is in the mind of the observer, and that conduct is to be judged in the light of its results for the life of the species, of which results the species itself is the judge. In these matters of ultimate standards, ideal or pragmatic, Professor Cooley does not dogmatize. Instead he presents a realistic account of the processes by which actual standards of value are molded, viewing them as social facts. This method of approach serves to clear the air wonderfully and really serves to demonstrate that the question is too many-sided to be reduced to any simple and dogmatic formula. There is room here for closer formulations than the author attempts, distinguishing between different senses of the term "value," but the burden of terminology necessary to such formulations would be very likely to deprive such a study of one great value which Professor Cooley's book possesses in remarkable degree: the quality of "getting across" to a wide circle of readers.

The book proves that it is possible to be scientific to the point of realizing that there is no absolute standard of progress and no proof that we are progressing, and clear-sighted as to the far-reaching character of the shortcomings of the existing order, and yet to be an unquenchable optimist. The author demonstrates the power of environment over the individual without tending in any way to relax the individual's responsibility for himself. Thus the tone of the book is wholesome on the personal side without being enervating on the side of constructive social effort and discontent—a balance that is not too easy to strike. It combines in rare degree a forward-looking and thoroughly mobilized

intellectual attack with those fine qualities of personal attitude which are often associated with political and economic conservatism and attributed to the "gentleman of the old school."

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*The Eve of the Revolution: A Chronicle of the Breach with England.*

("The Chronicles of America" Series.) By CARL BECKER.

New Haven: Yale University Press. 8vo, pp. xiii+267.

Price \$3.50.

In theme and authorship alike *The Eve of the Revolution* invites the attention of the student of economics. It is just the period which the champion of the theory of economic determinism would select for a verification of his hypothesis. It is just the episode which the careful student of human annals would use to test that thesis; and Becker is just the man to make the test. His contributions to the methodology of history have been substantial. He is acquainted with developments in the sciences whose intent it is to explain human motives and conduct. No American historian knows better what he is about when he undertakes a piece of work, or is more sensitive to the nature of his materials.

This does not, however, convict Becker of using a thin narrative as a disguise behind which to erect a philosophy of history or to attempt to fathom the mystery of human conduct. He never for a moment loses the consciousness of his purpose, the limitations of his materials, and the uses of his tools; but like a good workman he keeps his craft knowledge to himself or formally expounds it elsewhere. His history is a simple, straightforward narrative, with never a word about "motives," "conduct," or "causation." Were it not for a reference in the preface to the volume as "an enterprise of questionable orthodoxy," the reader would accept it as only an interesting story well told.

The author's conception of his task is the re-creation of the past. He has no idea that truth inheres in a whole which is a mere aggregate of details carefully thumbed out of the "documents." He realizes that the larger outlines of his picture, which enable us to see the movement as a whole, necessarily involve inference and interpretation; so he attempts "to convey to the reader, not a record of what men did, but a sense of how they thought and felt about what they did." This prompts a rapidly moving and entertaining narrative, made up of incident, quotation, and comment. This runs from 1757, when Franklin was "ordered home" to England, to the Declaration of Independence in